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November 6, 1953

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Dear Jack:

We have been very interested in your arrival and first interview with Osegueda, on which I appreciate very much the sidelights given in your letter of October 30. The straight response he received may well serve to jar him out of the haze about agrarian reform and his esteemed colleagues. During the two brief meetings I had with him in July he discussed with passion two subjects, the need to reorganize the Foreign Office and the danger of dictatorships in the Americas. Both matters were uppermost in his mind at that time, and since the reorganization he then projected, on a geographical area basis somewhat like our own, has now been announced, he may be free to devote all of his time to the second "problem".

It seemed to me that Osegueda is a rather typical product of the leftist-liberal depression era in the United States; that he had probably been up against it in the early '30's, about which he avoided discussion, and might have kept body and soul together in California by some menial labor which, to a youth of intellectual tastes and educational ambitions, was rankling and proved to him the necessity to change the economic system. His ideas on government are an exact parody of all that we heard up until, roughly, Pearl Harbor — the alliance between capitalism and Fascism, the emptiness of political democracy without economic security, and the deadly danger of military might allied with corrupt politicians. It would be my guess that his mental growth stopped at about that time, and this would not be unexpected in view of the historical fact that Guatemala dipped deeply into that era beginning in 1944 (about the time when

Osegueda

The Honorable
John E. Peurifoy,
American Ambassador,
Guatemala.

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Osegueda would have been exposed to a knowledge of Communist peril had he remained in the United States) and has not come out of it since. In this analysis, he would appear to be a prime example of arrested development; and the problem of how to stimulate his renewed growth, by education on the realities of international affairs since 1945, is a very real one. I doubt that it can be accomplished in Guatemala, if anywhere.

It is not just a case of a blind spot but of blinders. Fellows like Osegueda have just got their eyes closed to the fact that the "muchachos" they know from boyhood could be any kind of a threat to them or their country for preaching and organizing Communism, just as they refuse to look at the world map and see that Soviet expansion is a relentless and grueling reality. It is as much true of "Willy" Toriello, who at least has the advantage of seeing the picture in the United States, as it is with Osegueda who hasn't gone farther than Cuba. They probably have a genuine abhorrence for dictatorships, since they felt its lash in their own youth, but it is baffling that they do not recognize the same system, in a far more ruthless degree, in the Soviet Orbit.

I have often wondered whether constant repetition of the facts of Soviet dictatorship, such as the one party system, the unanimous votes in the "legislative" councils, the iron-clad control of press and public expressions, etc., could ever open the eyes of these who are blind because they will not see. They will probably not even read any of the factual material on the subject, and so the first part of the problem is how to get through the barrier and get the facts into their minds. If Osegueda would just listen instead of talking he might learn more.

I checked with Florence Finne on Miss Mutchler and understand that steps are being taken to have her stay in Guatemala. Everyone shares your high opinion of Miss Mutchler's valuable and efficient work.

With very best personal wishes,

Respectfully yours,

Raymond G. Leddy

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